KNOWN

A 12 Week Devotion
Exodus 3:1-15

Youth Becoming Leaders 2025
Dr. James Hampton

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS
High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

ASBURY UNIVERSITY
Academic Excellence & Spiritual Vitality

Additional credit for these devotionals goes to the following individuals:

Dr. Brian Hull

Caleigh Smith

Jenna Brock

INTRODUCTION & INSTRUCTIONS



Sometimes there are stories you've heard all your life, stories that are so familiar you know them by heart. Often with these stories, they become so familiar, so commonplace, that we can miss the beauty. Such is the story of Moses' call by God.

During YBL, we talked about this story for two weeks. Our two great speakers preached on it during the evening worship services. Wise teachers instructed each day on the topic of "Known: Living Out God's Call." And we examined our own communities to discover what needs are present and how we might be a part of meeting those needs.

For the next 12 weeks, you and your mentor or protégé will continue to look at this call story through a series of 12 devotions. "But why?" you ask. "Isn't this a bit of overkill? Won't this do the very thing you talked about make it so familiar that we miss the beauty of the story?"

We believe strongly that sometimes the reason something becomes commonplace is precisely that we fail to continue looking for new themes, new angles on the story, and new ways of seeing God at work. Our goal is that the next 12 weeks will serve as just that—a collaborative effort between the YBL participant, the mentor, and the leaders of YBL (who wrote these devotions) as you continue to ask and answer the question, "How do I live into God's call on my life?"

For each of the 12 devotions, we'd like you to read through the devotion individually and answer the questions.



We want to encourage you to write out your answers. Then, when you come together, use the questions and answers as a guide for your time together with your mentor/mentee. You don't have to always agree on things. In fact, you sometimes won't. That's OK. What is important is how you engage each other in this process and that you take the Scripture passage with all of its implications seriously. Part of biblical interpretation is to recognize that when we study Scripture together in community, we often arrive at different ways of reading and interpreting it than when we do it alone. Therefore, it is important that we read it individually and seek to interpret it and understand its implications for our lives. But then we also must bring those interpretations and implications to the community and seek clarity together on what the passage means. When we do this, we believe that the Spirit helps correct error and points us in the right direction as we attempt to now live into this new understanding.

As you work through the devotions, you may encounter new ways of thinking about this parable than you've previously discovered. We believe that God's truth is always relevant, and that no matter how many times we may have read a passage, God still has new truth for us to ponder and new implications for us to live out. Only as we open ourselves up to this possibility can God speak to us through those passages we've read or heard spoken on countless occasions, such as the story we are studying over the next 12 weeks.

Please know that you both are in our prayers as you begin this journey. May God's wisdom enfold you, the Lord's peace surround you, and the Spirit's grace overwhelm you as you work together to discover what it means to be a disciple of Christ.

WEEK One

To best understand the story of Moses' call, we have to understand the context in which this story falls. Read Exodus 1:8-17 and Exodus 2:1-15.

"It was the best of times; it was the worst of times…." This opening line from Charles Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities could easily also describe the life of Moses when we look at the first two chapters of Exodus.

Best of times—Moses is saved from certain death by his mother; rescued as a baby instead of being killed like all his male contemporaries; raised in Pharaoh's household and had access to all the finest things life had to offer.

Worst of times – discovering he was adopted and that his real heritage was that of a race of people in slavery; striking and killing the overseer who was beating a Hebrew slave and being labeled as a murderer; having to run away from his "home" believing that he would never return.

In short, Moses' life prior to his encounter with Yahweh in chapter 3 had more than its share of ups and downs. Consequently, when we find Moses in chapter 3, he is living as a nomadic shepherd, having been taken in by a family whose father is a priest in a different country and of a different religion. He is now married, and it would appear that Moses's old life seemingly had been cast into the distant past of history. Moses is starting over.

However, as Moses (and we) will soon learn, God wasn't done with Moses. The key to understanding God's call of Moses comes at the end of chapter 2 where we read:

WEEK One

"During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning, and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. So, God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them."

When God had previously established His covenant with Abraham, he promised him,

"I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
3 I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you" (Gen. 12:2-3)

So as God looks down on Yahweh's people, bound by slavery, and hears their groaning, the Creator chooses to act. And part of that act is to find a human who can serve as God's representative to bring the people out of slavery and into freedom so they can continue to fulfill the covenant.

So what difference does this context make for us? What can we learn from it? Often, we look at our previous life before we came to know Christ and believe that's in the past, and we're now living in the "new creation." While it's true that we are a new creation in Christ, we need to recognize that God doesn't dismiss our past but instead chooses to redeem it for the Lord's purpose. We'll explore this idea more fully later, but for now, know this: no matter how bad our past may have been, our Creator can use it for the glory of the Kingdom!

WEEK One

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. God chose to establish the covenant with Abraham and consequently all his descendants. Why is the covenant important for those who were in slavery? What are the implications for us today?

2. How does understanding the context prior to Moses' call help you better understand why God called Moses?

3. What's something about your past that you just aren't sure God can redeem? Why do you think that?

4. Think about the people around you who are bound in slavery to sin. How can you help them begin to recognize that God is there and cry out to him, just as the Hebrew slaves did?

Take time to pray for one another. Pray that over the course of the next 11 weeks (and hopefully beyond) each of you will learn how to be a better follower of Jesus.

WEEK Two

Please read the story of Moses' call aloud as found in Exodus 3:1-15. When we read something out loud, it often helps us find points of emphasis that silent reading fails to highlight. For this week, let me encourage you to read it aloud from the New International Version (NIV).



Photo: "Exodus 3:1-14 : The Burning Bush." New Christian Bible Study, https://shorturl.at/anL48.

"Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God."
— (Exodus 3:1)

It started out as just another ordinary day in the life of Moses. He woke early, dressed, kissed his wife good-bye, and headed out to the sheep pens. In the early morning hours, the air would have felt cool to his face, a fact he was grateful for because he knew the day would soon be another hot one.

Striding to the pens, he released the sheep and set out to find some new grazing lands. In order to ensure that the sheep didn't strip an area entirely of grass, the flocks had to be routinely moved from place to place. Sometimes, this meant moving quite far from where his family lived.

On this particular day, Moses led the sheep quite far away, to the foot of a Mountain called Horeb. In describing the mountain, the writer of Exodus calls it "the mountain of God." Does this mean that this was where God resided?

WEEK Two

No, but later it would be recognized by Moses and the people of Israel as a holy place not because of its location, but simply because God was present there when Moses was called.

Many people think that we can only encounter God in a place like church, or perhaps at a church camp or retreat setting. Think about the places where you encounter God. Obviously, church is one (hopefully!), but what are the others? For me, one of the places I feel God most strongly is when I'm in nature. As I enjoy the plants and animals, breathe in the air, and dig my hands in the soil, I'm reminded of God's provision for us and the gift of creation he has given us.

I also feel God strongly when I'm in a relationship with other Christians. As we laugh, play, talk, work, and even cry together, God's presence is often revealed powerfully through those relationships. We recognize God through the smile of a child, the love expressed by a parent, or the deep abiding friendship of a close friend.

So where do we hear God's call on our lives? The reality is that anywhere or anyone around us can be the "mountain of God"—a place where God is present and can speak to us. It can be the sermon your pastor or youth pastor preaches, the service project you participated in with your church, a documentary you watched about refugees, or a person who speaks truth into your life, such as your mentor. Just like Moses, we have to learn to recognize where God is, so that we can then hear his call on our lives.

WEEK Two

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. What are some of the places or people where you've encountered God? Why were these important to you?

2. What makes you come alive? What gives you passion? How can God use these to help you better understand your call?

3. Like Moses, all of us have one special place that we keep returning to where we regularly and powerfully experience God's presence. Do you have such a place? If so, where is it and why is it important for you?

4. Sometimes we can get tunnel vision and not see the larger picture of where God is at work in our lives. How can you learn to recognize God's work, even when it is not directly aimed at you?

Close in prayer, asking for God to make known His presence in all areas of your lives.

WEEK Three

This week, read through Exodus 3:1-15 again, this time from the NRSV. (Campers, yes, we know you memorized it. But please read it again out loud. This will keep you from allowing it to become commonplace.) We will utilize different versions as we go along in an attempt to keep the story fresh and to see how different versions emphasize certain elements of the story by their interpretation of Scripture.

There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3 So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight —why the bush does not burn up.” (Exodus 3:2-3)

Ever seen a burning bush? I actually have. I was traveling in the desert in sub-Saharan Africa, and as we drove across it, I suddenly saw a bush burst into flame! I was amazed. Our contact told me this was not uncommon in the desert. Due to the exceedingly dry conditions and the hot sun beating down on the plants, some plants are prone to reaching a critical point where their temperature rises so high that they spontaneously combust. It usually only takes a few minutes for the bush to completely burn away, leaving only ashes.

I’m sure Moses had seen this phenomenon multiple times as a desert dweller. It would have been pretty common for any shepherd of that area. But what attracted Moses to this bush wasn’t that it was on fire, but rather that it didn’t burn up. This is what caused him to move closer to it.

Thus begins the most momentous experience of Moses’ life—an encounter with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

WEEK Three



Winfield Bevins. (2024). The Burning Bush [Acrylic on 36x24 Canvas]. Private Collection in Alabama

But note that when Moses set out that day, he wasn't looking for God. He was simply looking for an area for his sheep to graze. In fact, we might even say that Moses was "totally oblivious even to the possibility of the confrontation that is to follow" (John Durham, Exodus: Word Biblical Commentary).

It was just another ordinary day that, in fact, turned extraordinary when Moses finally recognized God's presence in his midst.

Theologically, we understand that God is present everywhere around us. In Psalm 139, the Psalmist reminds us:

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?
If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

In other words, there is nowhere we can go that we won't find God.

And yet, too many of us tend to only see God in designated places: church, camp, mission trips. We expect God to show up there and so we come prepared. But we forget that God is present all around us. As a result, not only do we tend to miss God at work in our daily lives, but like Moses, we are totally oblivious even to the possibility that God might want to break through and speak to us.

WEEK Three

Learning to be open to hear God's voice is a learned behavior. It's like riding a bike. When you first started out, you couldn't even stay balanced. And then you struggled to keep the wheel straight. Only as you kept practicing did you finally learn to ride a bike well. The same is true with listening to the Holy Spirit's voice. The more we are intentionally aware of God around us, the more we purposively give Yahweh space to speak, and the more intentional we are about really listening, the easier it will be to actually hear God speak in our everyday lives.

God was present in the bush. But the Lord waited till Moses turned aside to see this strange sight to speak. God is speaking to all of us. The question is, are we willing to turn aside from our busy, overcrowded lives and listen to what the Creator has to say?

WEEK Three

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. Where are the places where you expect to encounter God? Why are these places important to you?

2. Time for assessment: how often do you really listen to hear God's voice? What does it sound like to you?

3. Knowing God desires to speak to us, why do you think many Christians don't make the time or space for this to happen?

4. Listening to God is a learned behavior. Like learning to ride a bike, it takes practice. What can you do to practice listening so you can hear God?

Close in prayer, asking God to help you become more sensitive to the Holy Spirit's voice. Pray for the project you're working on, that God would help you recognize Jesus' voice and that you would follow accordingly.

WEEK Four

As you prepare to read the story today, take a few moments to center and quiet yourself. Ask God to help you see the story anew, with fresh eyes, in order to capture the heart of what God has in store for you.



Again, read the story (Exodus 3:1-15) out loud.

Choose a version you haven't previously utilized. If you don't have multiple versions available on your bookshelf, use the Bible app you downloaded on your iPad. This will give you access to dozens of Bible versions.

"When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"
And Moses said, "Here I am."
—Exodus 3:4

Have you ever had someone you admired and respected, but you didn't think they knew who you were, call you by your name? How did that make you feel? Most often we are surprised this person knew who we were, but it makes us feel so good that they did.

So imagine Moses' shock as he approached the burning bush that didn't burn up and heard God speak. That would have been surprising enough—after all, bushes only talk in Disney movies. But then to hear God call him specifically by name would have been a bit overwhelming.

WEEK Four

Why was this so important? To better understand this, you have to understand the culture of that day. A name expressed the essence or identity of a person. According to Proverbs 22:1, "A good name is more desirable than great riches." In that day, a person's name was indicative of who they were at their core. Their very character was expressed. Think of the story of Jacob (Exodus 25ff). His name literally meant "supplanter, heel grabber, deceiver." Not exactly the name you want to be known by, right? And yet, it described him to a "T." All one has to do it look at his life and see the multiple times he deceived others to get what he wanted.

So when God calls Moses by name, God wants Moses to know that the Almighty knows Moses. God doesn't just know his name. God knows who Moses is. God knows Moses' past. The Great I Am knows about all the things he's done—including the murder of the Egyptian. God makes it clear that the Sovereign Lord has all the knowledge about Moses. And yet, even with that, God still calls him by name.

What an amazing thing to think that God knows our name. Whether your name is Hope, Alex, Lexie, Jeremiah, Victoria, Joshua, or Lizzy (or any other name!), God knows your name. In fact, God knows you! Jesus knows what makes you tick, your personality, your quirks (The Creator created you, after all). The Holy Spirit knows your passions, the things you dislike, and the way you think. God knows who your friends are, who the people you tend to avoid are, and how faithful you are in your relationship with Jesus. In other words, there is nothing about you that God doesn't already know about.

And yet, God still calls you by name. Jesus still desires to have an intimate relationship with you. Think about the implications of that.

WEEK Four

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. The God of the universe knows you by name. Yahweh knows us so intimately that God even knows the number of hairs on your head (Matt. 10:30)! How does that make you feel?

2. What difference does the fact that God knows you by name have on how you live your daily life?

3. When God calls Moses by name, Moses answers and says, “Here I am.” In responding, Moses was acknowledging not only that God knew him, but that this required a response. So Moses tells God he is here and listening. When God calls you by name, the LORD also requires a response. What is your response to God when the Holy Spirit calls you by name?

4. Our name expresses our identity. No, not the name your parents gave you, but the name God gave you—Christian (Christ-follower). How well are you doing in living into that name as part of your identity?

Close in prayer, asking for God’s strength and wisdom to live into the new identity God has given you as a child of the King.

WEEK Five

Working through the story verse by verse, the way we are doing it, can sometimes cause us to lose sight of the larger picture. Let me encourage you to read through the entire Scripture passage (Exodus 3:1-15) again. Read it aloud from a different version of the Bible than you have so far. (So not NIV, NRSV, or the one you used last week.) This will ensure you see how the various parts we're discussing fit into the larger story of Moses' call.

"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." 6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God."
—Exodus 3:5-6

As we know from Exodus 2, Moses had killed an Egyptian. When Pharaoh heard about it, Moses had to run for his life. I have to believe that for many years, Moses had lived with the guilt of this deed. So when God comes calling and declares to Moses that the ground he was standing on was holy because of God's presence, I have to believe that Moses instantly recalled that guilt of sin.

Of course, God is aware Moses isn't holy in and of himself. But since it is God who makes things and people holy, God welcomes Moses into the Trinity's presence. We recognize that, because of Jesus' death on the cross, Jesus Christ serves as our mediator today. This is what allows us to enter God's presence and become holy ourselves.

We should know Jesus so incredibly well that we will know immediately when something is not of God. We should have such an intimate, loving, soul-changing relationship with Jesus that anything that is even the least bit different from who God is and wants will stand out like a sore thumb. But the reality is this: until Jesus becomes our sole focus in life, the One whom we seek to follow more than anyone or anything else, we will never experience what it means to really be holy as God is holy.

WEEK Five

And while it is true that holiness emerges out of and is who God is, it is equally true, according to Scripture, that you and I can also be holy because of God. Otherwise, why would God command us, 'For I am the Lord your God; sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy... For I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt, to be your God; you shall be holy, for I am holy. (Leviticus 11:44-45 NRSV)?

You see, it is God, and God alone, who knows what is best for us. It is the King of Kings who created us, and it is the Trinity who controls the world. It is God who is not only the source of our life, but the sustainer of life as well. We have to learn to trust that goodness and be willing to submit to the All-Knowing's wise counsel. We have to be willing to turn from our self-rule and turn towards Gods-rule in our lives. It is only when we allow God to guide us in our living that we can establish right relationships with those around us.

In short, holiness is ultimately about our willingness to allow God to bring all parts of our life under the rule of the Good Shepherd. We often call this an act of consecration, whereby we give ourselves wholly to God, and allow the Lord to use us as the Spirit sees fit. But as important as our role of consecration is in becoming holy, in the end we must finally recognize that entire sanctification is entirely by grace. Saint Augustine, one of our early church fathers, put it best when he wrote, "Without God, we cannot; without us, God will not." Holiness is about our willing response to God's gracious invitation to repair that primary relationship with Jesus, and in so doing, to be restored to our original intent- being a holy person created in God's image to serve the Lord and the Kingdom.

WEEK Five

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word “holy”?

2. Is it really possible to be holy as God is holy? Why or why not?

3. Becoming holy requires us to give God complete control of our lives. How are you doing in that regard?

4. Becoming holy is a partnership. While God is the one who makes us holy, we have to be willing to allow the Spirit to make us that way. What might keep you from allowing God to make you holy?

Close in prayer, asking for God to continue the work of making you holy, and commit to Yahweh to do your part by giving Jesus total control of your life.

WEEK Six

Read the story aloud again by reading from The Message version. If you don't have it, you can find it on the "Bible" app or at www.biblegateway.com.

5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." 6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

I want us to revisit these verses today because of their importance- discussing the holy love of God is vitally important because of the implication for our lives.

Holy ground. The very words instill a certain sense of awe, reverence, fear, and perhaps even terror. Throughout the history of God's people, whenever the Lord encountered them, the people couldn't stand to look at God because of Yahweh's majesty, glory, and holiness. You may remember the story of Elijah, whom God led up on the mountain. While the verses we're looking at detail an episode where Moses encounters God's presence, there is another time equally important that occurs later in Moses' life. In Ex. 33 we find Moses asking a rather audacious question of God: "Show me your glory."



God makes it clear that if he really does this, Moses will die. So the Lord offers a compromise, telling Moses to go to a nearby mountain, wait there, and when God passes by, God would cover Moses with his hand to protect him.

WEEK Six

Imagine: God's holiness is so powerful that we cannot even stand in the Redeemer's presence without Jesus protection.

In many ways, we've lost the sense of what it means to stand before a holy God. We talk about God in best-buddy terms, saying, "God is my best friend." While being personal and intimate with God is extremely valuable, these verses remind us of something equally important—that God is holy. We need to emphasize both God's immediacy (relationality) and His separateness (His holiness). We tend to put God at a distance because of His holiness, but we also need to recognize that holiness is about goodness. After all, as the song says, 'You're a good, good Father.' (Chris Tomlin: Good, Good Father).

When most people think of God, we tend to describe God as love. And while correct, we need to add a modifier: God is holy love. But what does that mean?

To be holy is to be set apart for a purpose. It signifies that the item or person in question has been purified by God for God's use. God is so holy that he cannot endure sin, so Jesus' holy love seeks to purify the sin He encounters. Here's the key—holiness happens only in the context of relationship. There is a relationship between God and people. It is Jesus who sanctifies those with whom the Trinity is in relationship.

So to say that God is "holy love" is to embrace both the intimate relationship Jesus offers and to recognize that God is wholly different from us. We can never fully stand in God's presence without acknowledging that we are sinful people when our lives are juxtaposed with the holiness of God.

WEEK Six

The ground Moses stands on is holy, not because it is inherently so, but because God has made it so by the Redeemer's presence. Therefore, Moses is asked to follow the custom of removing his shoes as a sign of respect. Gowan writes, “Moses first encounters holiness as a fire and as a warning (‘Come no closer!’), leading him to protect himself from it, but the one who speaks to him at that dangerous place is a God who is about to save his people” (p. 26). 1

I have no doubt that, much like in Isaiah in his encounter with God (Isaiah 6), Moses felt unworthy to be in God’s presence. He may have experienced shame and unworthiness (“Moses hid his face, afraid to look at God”), recognizing that in comparison to God and the Divine’s holiness, Moses fell so far short he couldn’t even see the end.

But hear the God news—God responds to Moses and says, “I am the God of YOUR father” (emphasis added). In other words, God wants Moses to understand that God knows Moses’ story. And even knowing it, God desires to be in relationship with Moses. And because God is the one who decides what is holy, God seeks to set Moses apart, to purify him, for God’s use and make Moses holy.

To ever fulfill our call requires us to recognize that we can only do this when we are in relationship with God and allow the Lord to purify us and set us apart for the Kingdom use. So the question is, do you know this holy love? Have you allowed God to purify you so that you can do the Creator’s will for your life?

WEEK Six

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. There are a lot of people who aren't convinced teenagers can be holy people. But I think they're wrong. Your idealism makes you the perfect candidate to be holy because you earnestly believe God wants to use you and are willing to allow him to do it. Since God desires to make you holy ("Be holy as I am holy"), what would you say to someone who doesn't believe teenagers can be holy?

2. If part of being holy is to be set apart for a purpose, to what purpose does God desire to set you apart?

3. As you think about God's holiness, how does it make you feel?

4. How does being holy help us in living out our call?

Pray with and for each other that we would be willing to allow God to make us the holy people Jesus desires.

WEEK Seven

Read the story (Exodus 3:1-15) aloud again from your favorite Bible version.



When you really understand it, these are some amazing verses. Just think—the God of the universe, the God who made everything, saw the needs of a rag-tag group of slaves and heard their cries for deliverance.

Even more importantly, the great I AM then willfully chooses to help them. God makes the decision to deliver them because there is injustice and God is a God of Justice.

In many ways, we seem to have forgotten this concept today. We see injustices all around us on nearly a daily basis, but more often than not we choose not to respond. Yet, part of what it means to walk in God's holy love is to develop the ability to name and confront injustice in specific ways. To do this requires having the eyes to SEE the injustices around us. This requires us to be willing to get out of our normal routines, to go to the places where people are, and to actually see them as people made in God's image. The term "Hebrews" refers to any group of marginal people who have no social standing, own no land, and who endlessly disrupt ordered society. They are "low-class folks" who are feared, excluded, and despised.

WEEK Seven

Equally important is then having the willingness to actually DO something about it. The problem, of course, is that too many times we see the needs around us, but fail to respond. Truth be told, we don't always do a good job of loving others in the same way that God loves us. The homeless guy who stands on the corner panhandling is a real nuisance at first, and we have to work really hard to ignore him. "There are lots of agencies to help people like that," you reason, "and besides, I've heard that some people choose to be homeless." But it's not long before you walk by the guy without realizing he's even there. He is nothing more than part of the scenery. We forget that he's a real human being with needs.

To accept God's call on our lives requires us to then do the things of God. It means we love the unlovable, we minister to the downtrodden, we rescue the perishing. In other words, to love God with our heart, soul, mind and strength means we also must love our neighbor.

As part of your YBL project, you were asked to do some research into the needs of your community in order to determine the best project for you to accomplish. Why is it so important for us to know the needs around us? Because if we don't recognize them, we begin to assume there are no needs, and we act accordingly.

As we shall see, while God certainly could have rescued the Hebrew slaves by Godself, the Lord chose to use Moses in the deliverance. Similarly, God chooses to use us to bring about the deliverance of the oppressed in our midst. We are called to join God in this holy endeavor of bring justice to the world.

WEEK Seven

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. Think about the community in which you live. What are the needs present there? Why do you think these needs exist?

2. What are some ways in which your church strives to meet the needs of your community? How involved are you in any of these ministries?

3. What are the agencies in your area that are working to meet the needs of the community? How might you join in with them in their work?

4. To meet the needs of others requires us to depend on God. Time for an honest evaluation—how well are you depending on God for your strength to actually engage the needs of others?

We are now 7 weeks removed from YBL. As you think about your project, pray with your mentor that God will open both of your eyes to the needs around you and give you both a God-given desire to right the injustices around you.

WEEK Eight

Sometimes hearing the story from a child's perspective can help us discover things we might otherwise miss. Let me encourage you to read the story of Moses's call as found here: http://www.dltk-bible.com/%5C/exodus/moses_the_shepherd-cv.htm

And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. 10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."
—Exodus 3:9-10

I'm sure as Moses listened to this theophany (revelation from God), he had to be pretty excited. God has just declared that the Holy One has heard the cry of the Hebrew people; the Savior has witnessed their poor treatment. And then God says that the Almighty is going to deliver the people. By this time, Moses was probably whooping it up, ready to thank God for the assistance.

And then comes the kicker. God said, "I'm sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people…out of Egypt." At this point Moses' cheering probably stopped, and his view of God forever changed.

Remember, Moses had been raised in the Pharaoh's household. He knew what the Pharaoh was like. In fact, in the book of Exodus, "Pharaoh" is a symbol for the anti-creation forces of death that take on the God of life. Under a regime of slavery, subjects become objects, not even considered human any longer. The Hebrews, who have just been identified by God as a people, are in the process of losing their identity. They are slaves of another, not a people in their own right. To be in the service of Pharaoh means harshness and bondage, the lack of freedom to be what one is called to be.

WEEK Eight

Knowing all this, Moses is understandably scared about this call. God is inviting Moses to join God's Story of redemption, as he represents God before Pharaoh. We have to understand that God's actions in the world are always undertaken by humans who are summoned into God's dangerous service. What did it mean for Moses to join God's Story? Moses faced the risk of death at the hand of Pharaoh because Moses had killed the Egyptian. He faced possible rejection by his own people. Already they knew Moses had killed someone and run away, so why would they trust him now?

As you might imagine, hearing this call from God did not bring warm fuzzies to Moses. Moses had a family now, a wife and son. He had a new home, a new extended family, a new occupation. I'm sure Moses had his own dreams and hopes for the future, and they did NOT include going back to Egypt and having to confront the most powerful human of his time!

All of us have hopes and dreams for our future. When I was a teenager, I thought my future was football. I had offers for full-rides from multiple D-1 schools and had already given a verbal commitment to a school. I had my future planned out; I was in charge and knew what I wanted. The problem was I couldn't anticipate that just before my senior year of high school, I got thrown from a horse, and tore multiple ligaments and bones in my leg. Once the full extent of the injury was known, all the offers I had for scholarships were withdrawn. All of a sudden my dreams and hopes were dashed. But God then reminded me of a call to ministry I had been running away from since 8th grade. I had to be willing to give up my hopes and dreams in order to follow God's dream for me.

WEEK Eight

Not all of us will be asked to do that. In fact, more often than not, God will work through those hopes and dreams. But sometimes, when God calls us to do something radically different than what we thought was our future, it can be hard...really hard. We might feel like it's unfair that God would ask this of us. We might beg God to let us follow our previous path so we can fulfill our dreams. We might even choose to ignore or run away from the call. But the call is still there, and God continues to seek us out.

The great thing about God's call on our lives is that it is trustworthy. Even when we, like Moses, can't see the end, we can trust that God knows the way and is already working to prepare the way for us. What an amazing promise!



WEEK Eight

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. What are your hopes and dreams for the future? How would you feel if God asked you to give those up in order to follow His call? Would that cause you to question God's call?

2. As you understand what you think your future holds, how will your call to love God and neighbor impact that?

3. Is it hard for you to trust that God has your best interests at heart? Why or why not?

4. As we stated in week 3, listening is a learned behavior. So is the ability to trust God. How can you learn to better trust God in your daily life?

Pray for each other that God will help you develop the willingness to trust the Holy Spirit to lead you.

WEEK Nine

But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”
—Exodus 3:11

Sometimes it’s easy to get overwhelmed by the multitude of needs around us. There are just so many needs, and some of those needs are so huge that we can’t even get our minds around them. Some of the needs are the result of personal choice, while many are the result of systemic issues over which the person had no control. For example, some of the racist issues of this last year. Either way, we tend to look at those needs and say, “What can I realistically do? I’m just one person.”

Moses was the same way. God had just tasked him with the following:
1) Go back to the land where he is wanted for murder
2) Appear before the Pharaoh and demand that he free his entire slave population.



No small tasks to be sure! And so, like most of us when confronted with being asked to address the needs around us, Moses ducks and weaves in every possible way to avoid the body blow of God's request. If you read Exodus 4, you’ll see that Moses continues to give objection after objection about why he is not qualified to do this.

Surely God can find someone better suited for this! However, God answers all of Moses’ objections patiently but firmly—God has chosen Moses for this task. The lesson for us is this: God uses unpromising and even unwilling material.

WEEK Nine

Moses' "Who am I?" no doubt expresses his sense of inadequacy for what he is asked to do. This inadequacy may rest in part on the failure of his earlier efforts to intervene and the negative response of his Hebrew kin (2:11-14). In part, it may rest on the sheer magnitude of the task. But God seizes on the opening provided by this rhetorical question and implicitly offers Moses a revised self-understanding (as though suggesting he think of himself "under a different pretext"). Whoever and whatever Moses may have thought himself to be, he is now to see himself as someone God is with.

"Who am I?" also carries with it the idea that Moses' story is not enough. What does he have that would compel the Pharaoh of Egypt to listen to him? But when he asks this, God responds. "This is not your story. It is My Story. I only ask that you be willing to follow My Story and be used. Are you willing?"

Who Moses is is not the question; it is rather, who is with Moses?

Moses is also feeling this. After God tells Moses what the job is, Moses' response is, "'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" He's feeling the effects of his past, wondering why Pharaoh would even listen to him.

Have you been there? God is calling you to step up, to follow the Spirit's call for your life, to take on a new ministry, but because of decisions you made in the past, you're fearful you won't be able to do it.

But God made clear to Moses (and therefore, to us) that our past does not define us. God did not make a mistake in calling you. The Creator knew exactly what he was doing, and saw that Jesus could redeem that past and use it for Kingdom glory.

WEEK Nine

As **you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:**

1. Is there something in your past that you think might disqualify you from serving God and others? Without revealing details, talk about why you believe this.

2. What work might God be calling you to do?

3. Is it hard for you to believe that God's grace is sufficient for you, regardless of your own past? Why or why not?

4. Feeling inadequate to do God's work (or even follow God) is a natural human response. How can we move from feeling inadequate to feeling confident?

As you pray, remind each other that God doesn't make junk and that, regardless of our past, God wants to use us for the Kingdom.

WEEK Ten

Students were required to memorize the passage (Ex. 3:1-15) as part of their application to YBL. See if your mentee can still recite the passage from memory. If they can't, encourage them to continue working on that so Scripture stays near their heart.



And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."
—Exodus 3:12

Have you ever made a promise to someone? We make promises, fully intending to keep them. But sometimes we forget. Sometimes circumstances keep us from fulfilling the promise. Or sometimes we try to keep the promise, but the situation doesn't allow us to do it.

"I'll be with you," God promises Moses. This is no arbitrary promise. When God makes a promise, God always keeps it. Throughout Scripture, God makes this promise to people repeatedly. More importantly, God keeps the promise every time Yahweh makes it.

God wanted Moses to know that if God was sending Moses to fulfill this dangerous task, God would not only go with Moses, but would ultimately bring Moses back to this mountain to worship.

WEEK Ten

Later in the chapter, God even addresses Moses' concerns about his ability to speak, his worry that Pharaoh wouldn't listen. Even these gifts are embedded in God's presence. Moses' brother-in-law, Aaron, will speak, but he will speak Moses' words. Moses' staff will turn into a snake, but it will happen because God is there making it happen.

I think sometimes we get confused, thinking, "OK, well God gave me these interests, this ministry focus, so God needs to help me." However, vocation is not my asking Christ to join me in my ministry as I offer Christ to others, but rather it is my joining with Jesus Christ in his ongoing ministry as God offers himself to others through me. The difference may seem subtle, but it is profound.

For one thing, it changes the way we pray about ministry, e.g., "Lord, I've got to do this and this, so help me." The Psalms are full of help prayers, so there's nothing wrong with those. However, our prayers should be changed from "help me" to "help myself to you." This moves the focus to what God wants to do, and how God wants to use us, to do ministry through us, and where we serve as a channel for Christ. So the real question is, what is God calling you to do?

If you have been making the excuse of "Yeah, but…" and continue to do so, you will never be truly happy and at peace until you, along with Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and millions upon millions of others, say, in essence, "Here am I, send me."

I love the way Frederick Buechner describes this issue of calling: "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." What are your passions? Your heartfelt desires? These are the things that God will use to help you fulfill God's call on your life.

WEEK Ten

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. What is the deep gladness that God has placed in your life? The thing that makes you excited, the thing that you just feel overjoyed to participate in? The deep gladness we have is part of your calling. So how can you take that one thing and use it to serve Jesus and to share it with others?

2. Joining with God where the Holy Spirit is at work is a major focus of living into our call. Look around you. Where do you see God already at work, and how can you join in that work?

3. How does it make you feel knowing that whatever God is calling you to do, God has promised to be with you? What difference does this make for living into your call?

4. Knowing our "deep gladness" is important. However, equally important is understanding the world's "deep hunger." What are the needs around you? How can your deep gladness help meet those needs?

As you pray for each other, ask for God's discernment to recognize where God is at work, and then for courage to join in with God in that area of ministry.

WEEK Eleven

Read the passage out loud together, with one of you reading Moses' words, and one of you reading God's words as a response.

13 Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"
14 God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.'"
15 God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.'
"This is my name forever,
the name you shall call me
from generation to generation."
—Exodus 3:13-15

What difference does it make that God told Moses his name?



In giving a name, God commits to being a part of this people's history, to participate in their story forever. In giving a name, God becomes accessible to the people; an intimacy is established that cannot exist when one's name is not known.

WEEK Eleven

Knowing that Moses is concerned with the funk from his past, God takes his time with Moses. After all, 40 years of feeling like a failure, with lots of regrets, takes time to get over. God gives Moses a new identity, but just as importantly, God begins to more fully reveal the Spirit to Moses. In this situation, Moses is called upon to both know AND to be known.

You see to live into our calling requires constant regular encounters (plural) with God where the Spirit begins to reveal to us who Jesus is. Like Moses, we have a past, one that sometimes makes us think we can't be used by God. When that past, that funk is thick and nasty, good intentions and "want to" won't get you by. But the revelation of God will. "I am the god of your father—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Don't tell me about your past, because I am the God of the past. I've been there." Moses now knows that God knows him and his past. Then God says to him, "But I am also the God of the present and the future. I am walking with you. Even in those moments when the fear strikes you, and you don't think you can make it, I am."

When God gives a name, God answers, "I am who I am." There are many interpretations of this phrase. The verbs used here may be better translated, "I will be who I am." One possible translation that I really like is, "I am free to be whom I want to be." In essence, God is saying, "I will be God for you." In other words, nothing can limit God. There is no residue, no funk that God can't work through.

Not only does God know who Moses is, but God makes plain that Moses can also know God! As God's identity is disclosed, Moses discovers his own. No longer is he a nomad on the run. Now he is named as one in relationship with God, one who has been called to fulfill God's promise. As a result, he is no longer the same. Moses' life is forever changed because of this encounter.

WEEK Eleven

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. Knowing God's name means we are in relationship with the I AM. What difference does it make that God, in giving a name, promises us "I will be free to be who I want to be"?

2. How does it make you feel knowing that God knows you by name? How does this make a difference in how you live your life for God?

3. As stated, "to live into our calling requires constant regular encounters (plural) with God where the Spirit begins to reveal to us who Jesus is." How are you regularly encountering God to discern who Jesus is and what He desires for you?

4. How does your past keep you from living into God's call? What will it take for you to give your past to God and allow the Savior to redeem it as part of your call?

Close in prayer, asking God to make Himself known in powerful and regular ways so that you can better discern your call to follow Jesus.

WEEK Twelve

God is so proactive that the Lord is even faithful to call us because of our past!

We spend much of our lives running away from our past. But God says, “Wait, that is part of who you are, and I want to use that as well.” Think about Moses past—having grown up in Pharaoh’s household, he would understand how things worked in the royal household, and the importance that would play in his negotiations with Pharaoh. Think about the fact that as a baby, he was put in a pitch-covered basket and set adrift, eventually to be found by Pharaoh’s daughter.

Later, I can imagine that as he encountered the sea that lay before the Hebrews after God had led the Hebrews out of Egypt, Moses looked at it and said, “Huh, just water. I’ve been through that before.” Moses literally means “brought out” because he was brought out of the water as an infant.

After Moses fled Egypt, he ended up leading sheep in the desert for 40 years. Not very exciting, is it? All he did day after day was help move the sheep from point A to point B in search of food and water. And yet, God used that experience, as Moses later led large numbers of people through the desert for 40 years, trying to find food and water.

Isn’t it crazy that the past we’ve been trying to escape can become used by God in our present? In his amazing book, The Wounded Healer, author Henri Nouwen makes the case that our funky past is often part of the ministry we will have in the future. In other words, having experienced the things we have, this will allow us to better minister to others who are now experiencing similar things as we did.

WEEK Twelve

What if the very thing that you've been trying to escape— what if that is what God wants you to use to heal others? What if your past becomes the very thing God wants to use because God doesn't make mistakes?

The future is wide open to you. Where God wants to take you is beyond anything you could ever have envisioned. As we embrace God's calling on our lives, we never know how God will use us.

I've intentionally not listed all the things that could be in your past. I don't have to. You know them. You know all the stuff that keeps you stuck, that keeps you from following God's call, the thing that keeps you from being who God intended you to be.

If there is any hindrance from your past, God calls you to lay it in the Redeemer's hands, to surrender it to God to do with as the Spirit wants. Only then can God redeem it and make it something holy, something that God can use for Jesus' glory. Only then can you see it as something valuable that God wants you to use to minister to others and help them encounter God.



WEEK Twelve

As you prepare to meet with each other this week, answer the following questions:

1. What items from your past most concern you as you think about living faithfully into God's call?

2. Time to be honest. Have you given God ALL your past? Or are you holding onto things, believing them to be so bad that not even God can use them?

3. Can you envision God using the things of your past in a form of ministry? If so, what would that look like?

4. We've looked at this passage for 2 weeks at YBL, and now an additional 12 weeks together as mentor/mentee. What are the most important things you've learned from this passage that you can apply to your life?

As you finish these 12 weeks of devotions, use your time to pray that God will continue to impress on each other the themes discussed. Thank God that each of you is a better person because of your time together. And close by praying for each other's future, as each of you endeavors to live into God's call.